Naval versions of Prithvi is progressing. Government approval has also been given for design and development of next phase of Agni, i.e. long range system using state-of-the-art technologies developed indigenously.

Army laboratories to private sector

3850. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA:
SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has thrown open some of its major research laboratories to the private industry and set up six task forces to work out the parameters for long standing cooperation between the Ministry and the Industry;

(b) whether the task force would be instructed to ensure that defence secretary is not leaked; and

(c) the advantages to be accrued to the country by throwing open the army laboratories to private sector?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Eight laboratories of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) working in the areas of life science, water purification, materials including composites, electronics, advanced computing, robotics and artificial intelligence have been identified for industries' participation. Six task forces have been constituted to submit recommendations to enhance the partnership between the Defence Ministry and the Industry.

(b) Adequate measures will be taken to ensure that sensitive and classified information about programmes of Ministry of Defence is not disclosed.

(c) The enhanced partnership between DRDO laboratories and industry will enable optimum use of the expertise and infrastructure available in the Industry for Defence Research and Development programmes.

Aerial bombs

3851. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have received complaints that despite the ban in dealing with middlemen and agents, concerned officials in the Ministry and IAF were insisting on buying aerial bombs from a Romanian Trading agent;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what action has been taken by Government to find out the factual position and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Government has received a complaint from a Romanian firm by the name Ratmil, which claims to be the only manufacturer of aerial bombs in Romania and also claims to have the licence from the Ministry of Defence, Romania for supplying these bombs to the Ministry of Defence, Government of India, Ratmil also claimed that Romtehnica with whom the Ministry of Defence had negotiated the contract is not the manufacturer but only a trading company.

(c) Immediately on receipt of this complaint the file records were carefully perused and it was found that the allegation was completely incorrect. In fact, Romtehnica with whom Ministry of Defence has carried out negotiations, had supplied a certificate issued by the Ministry of Defence Romania certifying that Romtehnica is the only authorised firm to deal with such supplies. The Indian Ambassador to Romania was asked to make necessary enquiries and to confirm as to who is empowered by the Romanian Ministry of Defence to contract with the Ministry of Defence, Government of India for supplying the bombs. The Romanian Ministry of Defence has confirmed that the State owned Company "Romtehnica" under the Romanian Ministry of Defence is the